

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed December 11, 2003, has been carefully reviewed and by this Amendment Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 4 and 8. Claims 1-9 are pending in the application.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter, particularly to a mathematical algorithm without any limitation to a practical application.

By this Amendment, Applicants have clarified the claims to more affirmatively set forth that the present invention is limited to the practical application of document classification. Specifically, the present invention is directed to an automatic document classification method that classifies documents in accordance with clusters within a database. Such a method may be used for information retrieval or office document processing as noted at page 1, lines 15-20, and at page 2, lines 15-20, but the practical application remains a process by which documents are classified as belonging to an identified cluster within a database.

The practical step of classifying a document within a cluster goes beyond the mathematical algorithm in that the latter only identifies a most likely cluster to which a document may belong. The choosing involved in the step of classifying goes beyond the calculating process (see the specification at page 19, line 8 through page 20, line 3). As further indicated by the specification text at page 6, lines 4-6, and page 23, line 4, the mathematical algorithm comes up with an outcome representing the most probable similarity measure of the document belonging to a cluster, but actually *classifying* the document goes beyond this outcome to practically implement the result in a manner having real-world application (see, e.g., the example in the specification beginning on page 14).

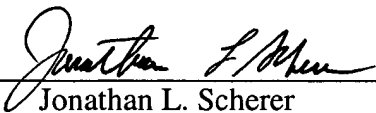
For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-9 are presented as being directed to statutory subject matter and favorable reconsideration and allowance thereof is requested.

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With this amendment, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney so that the present application can receive an early Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted

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